



Ceremony for the Vigil Honor



SCOUTING AMERICA™
ORDER OF THE ARROW

Safeguard This Text

The Order of the Arrow, recognizing the allure of the unknown, uses mystery to enhance the induction adventure. All ceremonial concepts and materials should therefore be safeguarded. However, legitimately interested adults are welcome to any information regarding the OA's nature, purpose and methods.

If candidates are apprehensive they should be informed about what will occur during the ceremonies and assured that they may withdraw at any time. The policy of the national Order of the Arrow committee is that actions that might frighten, degrade, embarrass or injure a candidate in any way have no place in Scouting and are forbidden. Any interaction with candidates, physical or otherwise, must be respectful.

Lodges are not authorized to deviate from the ceremonies as written.

Nothing in the OA shall be interpreted as interfering with any member's religious obligations.

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Scouting's Barriers to Abuse

Two-deep leadership for all Order of the Arrow activities must meet the requirements of Scouting's Barriers to Abuse; a link to the Barriers to Abuse, which is part of the [Guide to Safe Scouting](#), can be found at www.scouting.org/YouthProtection.

The relevant portion of this policy is quoted below:

Two registered adult leaders 21 years of age or over are required at all Scouting activities, including all meetings. There must be a registered female adult leader 21 years of age or over in every unit serving females. A registered female adult leader 21 years of age or over must be present for any activity involving female youth or female adult program participants. Notwithstanding the minimum leader requirements, age and program appropriate supervision must always be provided. All adults staying overnight in connection with a Scouting activity must be currently registered as an adult volunteer or an adult program participant. Adult volunteers must register in the position(s) they are serving in.

A Note on Fire Bans

A problem that may arise during a Vigil Honor induction weekend is dealing with dry weather and a fire ban. In such cases, lodges are encouraged to use creative solutions for alternatives to fire while still preserving the spirit of the ceremony. Possible solutions include creating a substitute fire for the candidates such as a lantern or candle. Always be sure to have enough water available and practice good fire safety. The use of accelerants, chemicals, or pyrotechnics to start fires or in ceremonies is prohibited (see the [Guide to Safe Scouting](#)). All aspects of the Induction have been carefully designed to create an inspirational adventure experience for each candidate. When environmental conditions require adaptive methods, it is important to preserve the intended effect as closely as possible.

Approved Attire for Order of the Arrow Ceremonies

Guidelines related to the approved attire that may be worn in Order of the Arrow induction ceremonies can be found online at oa-scouting.org/resources/inductions/approved-attire.

Planning for the Vigil Honor induction ceremony must include arranging for drivers for the candidates and the ceremonial participants following the ceremony.



Introduction

The first Vigil Honor ceremony was held in 1915 when our founder, E. Urner Goodman, became the first Vigil Honor member. Since then thousands of Order of the Arrow members have been accorded this honor.

The beauty of the Vigil Honor ceremony lies in its simplicity. The most important aspect of this experience is the Vigil itself.

Care must be taken by those in charge of the Vigil ceremony to be properly prepared. Advanced planning and preparation are essential if the Vigil Honor experience is to be meaningful and have a lasting value.

It is possible for a single Vigil Honor member to induct a Vigil candidate. However, the ceremony is more impressive when several Vigil Honor members participate. In all cases, it is important to comply with two-deep leadership and Safeguarding Youth requirements. If needed for compliance, consider requesting assistance from Vigil Honor members from another lodge, or asking a Scouting America professional who is not a Vigil Honor member to assist.

The pre-Vigil ceremony is extremely impressive when only one candidate is going

through the pre-Vigil ceremony at a time. Some lodges, when they are inducting multiple candidates, like to present the pre-Vigil in a way that creates the impression that there is only one candidate being inducted. To achieve this the lodge will send the candidates into the ceremonial grounds one at a time. Since the Vigil Chief's speaking part in the pre-Vigil ceremony takes only a little over three minutes, the Vigil Chief repeats the speaking part multiple times. Then each candidate is given a separate guide to lead them away to the *place of the Vigil*. Another option is to conduct the pre-Vigil Ceremony at the *place of the Vigil* for each *candidate*. At the conclusion of that ceremony, all Vigil members depart except the *candidate's guide*, who remains only to ask the scripted questions and present the parting instructions for the morning before departing.

There is no specified calling-out ceremony for Vigil Honor candidates. Each lodge may develop its own calling-out ceremony, especially when there are several candidates. However, no change may be made in the Vigil Honor ceremony as it is presented in this document.

Vigil Honor Terms

The *candidate* (or *candidates*) is the member (or members) about to take the Vigil.

The *place of the Vigil* is the site at which the *candidate* remains and maintains the fire.

The *call* is the summons of the Vigil Chief to the *candidate* at the ceremonial grounds.

The *initial charge* is the verbal message given to the *candidate* by the Vigil Chief immediately following the *call*.

The *guide* is the Vigil Honor member who guides the *candidate* to the *place of the Vigil* and meets the candidate upon its conclusion.

The *questions* are asked of the *candidate* by the *guide* en route to the *place of the Vigil*, or at the *place of the Vigil* if the pre-Vigil ceremony is conducted there.

The *torch* is the paraffin-impregnated sliver of wood, tipped with lashed matches, which the *guide* lights and hands to the *candidate* to kindle the fire.

The *parting instructions* are those given to the *candidate* by the *guide* just before departing the *place of the Vigil*.

The *voices* are those heard by the *candidate* after starting the Vigil.

The *rendezvous* is the appointed place of meeting—*guide* and *candidate*—after the Vigil.

The *place of the honor* is that place where the *candidate* formally receives the Vigil Honor.

The *name* is the Vigil name bestowed upon the *candidate* during the Vigil Honor ceremony.

Summary of the Vigil

A calling-out ceremony may be conducted before the Vigil. At this time the *candidate* is handed a sealed envelope containing necessary practical instructions for guidance, including when and where to report to start the Vigil.

The *candidate* reports to the ceremonial grounds at the specified time as directed, and sits unobtrusively to await the *call*.

The Vigil Chief issues the *call* to the *candidate*. The *guide* and any other Vigil members present should arrange themselves such that they are not in the line of sight from the *candidate* to the Vigil Chief during the ceremony, but they can be visible to the *candidate* as the *candidate* arrives at the ceremonial grounds.

The *candidate* leaves with the *guide* for the *place of the Vigil*. En route, the *candidate* answers the *questions* of the *guide*.

The *guide* halts the *candidate* and the *guide* explores alone the final part of the path to the *place of the Vigil*.

The *guide* then returns and guides the *candidate* to the *place of the Vigil*. The *guide* lights the *torch* and gives it to the *candidate* to kin-

dle the fire. The *guide* then hands the *candidate* a second sealed envelope containing instructions, bids farewell to the *candidate*, and retires.

The Vigil begins, and a little later the First Voice speaks from the darkness. The Vigil continues and later the Second Voice speaks from the darkness.

At sunrise the *candidate* extinguishes the fire and returns to the *rendezvous*, there meeting the *guide* for escort to the Vigil Chief.

The Vigil Honor ceremony proceeds. If there are multiple candidates, this ceremony can be conducted for all the *candidates* at the same time, or multiple times, once for each *candidate*. The signs, watchwords and Obligation of the Vigil Honor are then revealed to the *candidate*.

At a public recognition ceremony promptly following the Vigil, the Vigil Honor insignia is conferred on the new member.

Vigil Preparation

At a calling-out ceremony on the Vigil night, a Vigil Honor member hands the *candidate* a letter in a sealed envelope that reads as follows (lodges may modify as appropriate to reflect their local conditions):

Dear [Candidate's name]:

In preparation for the journey you will embark on tonight, please immediately prepare your pack. You will need blankets or a sleeping bag, a poncho, a watch, matches, a knife, a flashlight, and an ax. Report to the ceremonial grounds located at _____ precisely at _____ o'clock in the evening. Be seated and await your summons to stand before the Vigil Chief. You will then receive further instructions.

[Signed] _____
Vigil Chief



Pre-Vigil Ceremony

The Site. The Vigil ceremonial grounds should be located away from the main areas of camp in such a place that there will be no distraction from the solemnity of the occasion. If possible the Vigil ceremonial grounds should not be used for any other purpose. In many camps it is possible to find a “mysterious and secret place” that is known only to Vigil Honor members, the camp director, the camp ranger, and a few trusted people who need to know about it.

A fire is burning in the center of the circle.

The Principal and the Members. The Vigil Chief, standing or seated, is in the circle on one side of the fire. The *guide* and any other Vigil members present should arrange themselves such that they are not in the line of sight from the *candidate* to the Vigil Chief during the ceremony (*i.e.*, they are on the other side of the fire relative to the Vigil Chief, but far enough away that there is space for the *candidate* to be across the fire from the Vigil Chief). The *guide* and Vigil members should be standing or seated to match the Vigil Chief, and can be visible to the *candidate* as the *candidate* arrives at the ceremonial grounds.

The Candidate(s). The *candidate* reports to the ceremonial grounds as instructed. If the ceremonial grounds are in such a remote location that the *candidate* could not reasonably locate it with a map, the *candidate* is met by the *guide* at a designated location in camp and led to the ceremonial grounds. The *candidate* stands at the edge of the circle and awaits the *call* of the Vigil Chief.

Vigil Chief: Will [*candidate's name*] bring their pack and come forward to stand [or “sit”] before me?

The Vigil Chief points to the center of circle. The *candidate* comes forward bearing their pack and faces the Vigil Chief, either standing or sitting to match the Vigil Chief, who delivers the *initial charge* as follows.

Vigil Chief (slowly): My friend in the Wimachtendienk, you are about to take a journey of great significance. It is an adventure of greater importance to you than you can now know. The next hours will bring to you a memory which shall abide with you throughout life. First, I would direct you to search the vaulted aisles of memory. Many moons ago you came as a humble candidate, seeking the way into the circle of the Order. That way brought you from the torch-lit ceremony of testing the bow, through a night of silence and meditation—through paths of arduous toil—through hunger—through weariness of body—until you found haven in the circle of your brothers. Again, you must go forth—but this time not so much to try

your bodily endurance as to test—again in the silence of your own soul—your power to search to their ultimate depths your heart and conscience.

On you, then, is laid a charge. Remember the One who once spoke to you as was said,

“Listen to these admonitions
For your guidance on your journey.”

It is for you, from this moment onward, to search your soul in judgment. The high standard of the Vigil Honor is one—not of the body or of the mind—but of the spirit. In striving to be worthy of this honor, you seek to overcome selfishness, greed, hypocrisy. Prepare for joyous, unselfish service and personal consecration to these high and worthy ideals.

Aided by the One to whom your most secret thought, worthy or unworthy, is an open page, you, yourself, must measure the sincerity of your purpose.

From this moment on, until the ban be lifted, let no word pass from your lips, save in answer to a question by your guide or by another in the Vigil Honor.

Go then, with this your guide, out under the sky, there to keep your Vigil in the presence of your Maker.

The *candidate*, with the *guide*, departs in silence for the *place of the Vigil* that should be an isolated spot at the camp. At three specified points en route from the ceremonial grounds to the *place of the Vigil*, the *guide* shall halt the *candidate* and ask—in turn—the *questions*. If the pre-Vigil Ceremony is conducted at the *place of the Vigil*, the Vigil Chief and all Vigil members except the *guide* will depart at the conclusion of the ceremony. “Stay then, with this your guide, here to keep your Vigil in the presence of your Maker” is the script if this option is chosen. The *guide* would then ask the *questions* with an appropriate pause in between after the *candidate* answers.

At the first specified point, the following question is asked.

Guide: You have meditated briefly upon the earnest words spoken by the Vigil Chief. Do you still desire to seek the Vigil Honor in all sincerity of purpose?

On receiving an affirmative answer, the *guide* and *candidate* proceed to the second specified point.

Guide: Do you still propose to seek truly the Vigil Honor through the sincere examination of your most secret life motives?

On receiving an affirmative answer, the *guide* and *candidate* proceed to the third specified point.

Guide: Are you finally determined, in the silence of the Vigil, to humbly prepare yourself in spirit for this honor?

On receiving an affirmative answer, the *guide* and *candidate* proceed. As they near the *place of the Vigil*, the *guide* leaves the *candidate* and gives the words that follow.

Guide: Remain here and await my return.

The *guide* checks the *place of the Vigil* to ensure that no non-Vigil members are in the area, to be sure that the fire is laid, and that the firewood supply is available. Earlier in the day, Vigil members serving as wood gatherers should have prepared a supply of firewood and laid the fire. If water is required to put out the fire, water should be left near the fire. [The line above is omitted if the pre-Vigil Ceremony is conducted at the *place of the Vigil*.]

Guide: Come.

(The *guide* then leads the *candidate* to the *place of the Vigil*, faces them, and delivers the *parting instructions*.) [The line above is omitted if the pre-Vigil Ceremony is conducted at the *place of the Vigil*.]

Guide: Light the fire and keep it burning.

The *guide* lights the *torch* and hands it to the *candidate*, who lights the fire. After the fire is well lit, the *guide* continues. [The line above is omitted if the pre-Vigil Ceremony is conducted at the *place of the Vigil*, as the fire is already lit from the ceremony.]

Let not sleep overtake you nor the fire burn out—lest opportunity go with it. Should voices be heard in the depth of the night—give heed and answer. You are alone with your God. Here are your instructions.

The *guide* then hands the *candidate* a sealed envelope, which contains the following instructions, and departs silently.

The written instructions read:

At ____ a.m., extinguish your
fire and proceed to
_____, there to await
your guide.



The Vigil

Approximately forty-five minutes after the *guide* has departed, the First Voice shall call to the *candidate* by name.

First Voice: *[Give the candidate's name.]*

The First Voice awaits a response—or if no response, moves nearer and calls again until a response is made by the *candidate*. After the *candidate's* response, the First Voice continues.

First Voice: Here, from out of the darkness, my hand is stretched to you, my friend. *Be courageous. Be alert*—to turn from thoughts unworthy of this hour and purpose. *Be resolved*—to prepare yourself for the experience that is now within your reach.

(Pause.) I, too, have kept the Vigil.

If there are other Vigil members present after the First Voice is finished, (as an option) they may echo, in succession, "I too, have kept the Vigil." If there is more than one additional Vigil member beyond the First Voice, they should coordinate the order in which they will say "I too have kept the Vigil" if they choose to use that option. Approximately two hours after the First Voice has spoken, the Second Voice prepares to speak from a different point of concealment, if practical. The Second Voice shall call to the *candidate* by name.

Second Voice: *[Give candidate's name.]*

The Second Voice awaits a response—or if no response, moves nearer and calls again until a response is made by the *candidate*. After the *candidate's* response, the Second Voice continues.

Second Voice: The spirit of the Order sends me through the darkness to you, my friend. It is not for us to meet now face-to-face—nor yet while night and solitude reign in this your Vigil. Think, I beg of you, of the joy of service, of the happiness that lies in forgetfulness of self: think and speak from your heart to the God who made you.

(Pause.) Only thus can your Vigil be effective. Only thus, in the morning of a new day, when comes the single question, "Have you kept the Vigil faithfully?", can you find the true answer with the full approval of your inmost conscience.

(Pause.) I, too, have kept the Vigil.

If there are other Vigil members present after the Second Voice is finished, optionally they may echo, in succession, "I too, have kept the Vigil." If this option is used and there is more than one additional Vigil member beyond the Second Voice, they should coordinate the order they will use to say "I too have kept the Vigil."

At the appointed time in the morning, according to the written instructions, the *candidate* puts out the fire and returns to the *rendezvous*, is met by the *guide*, and is conducted in silence toward the *place of the honor*. They are met en route by the Vigil Chief, who speaks to the *candidate*.



Vigil Honor Ceremony

Vigil Chief: Have you kept the Vigil faithfully?

Upon receiving an affirmative answer, the Vigil Chief takes the candidate's pack and leads the *candidate*, who is followed by the *guide*, to the *place of the honor*. Each candidate's pack is placed just outside the *place of the honor*. If enough members of the Vigil Honor are present to do so, at the *place of the honor*, the group is formed as a triangle, with an opening in its base toward the approaching trio and its apex away from them. The Vigil Chief, followed by the *candidate*, shall pass through the opening, which shall then be closed by the *guide* and other Vigil Honor members once all the candidates have entered. The Vigil Chief shall turn within the triangle and, with their back to the apex, and face the *candidate(s)*. It is optional whether or not there is a fire at the center of the *place of the honor*.

Vigil Chief: My friend(s), it would be the deepest folly were I to attempt, through any poor words that I might speak, to add aught to the rich experience that now illuminates your heart more brightly—I am confident—than the daylight that has returned to illuminate the world. Because your heart and conscience have bidden you answer the single question in the affirmative, I am happily able, in the presence of these

members in the Vigil Honor, to admit you to its ultimate mysteries.

Listen, then, to the watchwords of the honor. They are—*Leadership in Service*.

Because of the qualities latent in your character, but discerned by others, you were selected for the Vigil Honor, but chiefly because it was sincerely believed that you can and will lead in the spirit of service to which our Order is dedicated.

Further to remind you of this I now disclose to you the sign of the Vigil Honor.

The sign is made as follows: Hold both hands flat over the stomach, with palms facing the stomach in a triangle formed by the thumbs at top and forefingers pointed down; the other fingers remain together.

The sign of the triangle—which you will now make as I have done—is here taken as the symbol of one who leads. As you hold this sign with me, listen now to the Obligation of the Vigil Honor.

The Obligation

Vigil Chief: With profound resolution, we of the Vigil Honor—Wimachtendienk, Wingolauchsik, Witahemui—do solemnly agree to assume the obligation of true leadership in service, setting the example of unselfish aim and purpose, so far as God shall give us strength and opportunity.

My friend(s), do you so promise without equivocation or mental reservation?

Candidate(s): I do.

Vigil Chief: Then it is my joyful duty to proclaim you (a) Vigil Honor member(s) of the Order of the Arrow—Wimachtendienk, Wingolauchsik, Witahemui—entitled to all its privileges. Henceforth, be known as *[give the candidate's Vigil name]*.

Repeat the "Henceforth, be known as..." line for each additional new Vigil Honor member.

The handclasp of the Vigil Honor is given thusly, which indicates the complete and fullest union in the high ideals of Scouting.

The Vigil Chief gives the *candidate* their left hand, adding one more finger to the Order of the Arrow handclasp, so that all fingers are interlocked, thus signifying the completeness of Vigil Honor membership.

The insignia of the Vigil Honor and public recognition will be conferred upon you at a later time.

The *guide* steps forward and grasps the new Vigil Honor member's hand in congratulations, using the handclasp of the Vigil Honor, followed by all other members of the Vigil Honor who are present, and the ceremony is thus concluded.



Public Recognition Ceremony

At the public recognition ceremony, the Vigil Chief shall come forward and gain the attention of the attendees in such a manner as to convey the impression that what is about to be said is of a serious nature. The setting may be at breakfast, a flag ceremony, or other suitable occasion early in the day following the Vigil. The new Vigil Honor member or members are among the audience.

Vigil Chief: We have a very special privilege just now—all of us. One [or “Some”] of our fellow Scouts has [or “have”] just returned from a journey of deep significance. During the hours of darkness there came to them a great experience in their life as a Scout. It is our duty and pleasure to see the visible sign of the honor they have attained bestowed upon them.

Will [*use their own name for all of the new Vigil Honor members*] please come forward and stand before us.

The Vigil Chief indicates a spot for the new Vigil Honor member(s) to stand. They come forward and stand, facing the Vigil Chief.

Vigil Chief: [*give the member’s own name*], because of the honor attained by you, it is my privilege to confer upon you its insignia, that of the Vigil Honor—Wimachtendienk, Wingolauchsik, Witahemui. May you wear it in the spirit of its meaning, already revealed to you.

The Vigil Chief places the Vigil Honor sash on the new member’s right shoulder. Repeat the above for each new Vigil Honor member.

I congratulate you, [or “each of you,”] and I am sure that the well wishes of all your fellow Scouts are stretched out to you from their very hearts.

The Vigil Chief bids the new Vigil Honor member(s) to turn and face the audience for their congratulations, and the public recognition ceremony is concluded.



Additional Ways to Improve the Candidate's Experience

There are several additional things that the Vigil Honor committee can do to improve the candidate's induction experience. Lodges can develop or continue traditions that enhance the Vigil Honor induction. When using an existing tradition, it is important to remember that traditions should only be used if they enhance the candidate's experience and comply with Order of the Arrow and Scouting America policies. Lodges should re-evaluate their traditions on a regular basis to ensure they continue to enhance and not detract from the experience of the *candidate*.

Vigil Honor Token. Some lodges choose to give the Vigil Honor *candidate* a token, such as a triangle that can be worn on the candidate's uniform or around the neck, in a public call-out ceremony. These symbols identify the individual as a *candidate* for the Vigil Honor and represent the Honor until the *candidate* has kept their Vigil and the Vigil Honor sash is presented.

Place of the Vigil. Special focus should be given to selecting the *place of the Vigil* for each *candidate*. This is the most important location during the induction process. This location is where the Vigil Honor *candidate* meditates and keeps their Vigil fire. A place with special significance to the *candidate* or particular natural beauty could be selected.

The candidate's experience can be greatly enhanced by selecting a meaningful location for the *place of the Vigil*. The location might

also be meaningful for the *guide*. Since the candidate's journey is a shared personal experience with their *guide*, the *place of the Vigil* can be a meaningful location for both people. It is important that the location be secluded from other Vigil Honor *candidates* and other people in general.

The Vigil Guide. The *guide* is the second most important person in the Vigil Honor experience. The *guide* is responsible for assisting the Vigil Honor *candidate* through the Vigil Honor induction process. The *guide* should be a Vigil Honor member and a person who will be meaningful for the *candidate*.

Careful attention should be given to ensure that the person selected as the *guide* is the person who can most enhance the experience for the *candidate*. *Guides* and *candidates* do not need to be the same relative age. It is important to comply with two-deep leadership and Safeguarding Youth guidelines throughout the Vigil Honor process.

Number of Candidates in Each Pre-Vigil Ceremony. The pre-Vigil ceremony can be performed for the entire induction class, part of the induction class, or each Vigil Honor *candidate* individually. Performing the ceremony for each individual Vigil Honor *candidate* is a more personal and unique experience. A large group ceremony can create a barrier of communication between the Vigil Chief and the Vigil Honor *candidates*.

Site of the Pre-Vigil Ceremony. The pre-Vigil ceremony is written to take place at the Vigil ceremonial grounds. Some lodges choose to conduct individual pre-Vigil ceremonies with each *candidate* at their *place of the Vigil*. This can further enhance the candidate's experience since the *place of the Vigil* has special significance to them.

If the lodge chooses to conduct the pre-Vigil ceremony at the *place of the Vigil*, then the fire should be burning and the Vigil Chief should be present at the *place of the Vigil* when the *candidate* arrives. The Vigil Chief should conduct the pre-Vigil ceremony and depart after the *initial charge*. Instead of departing with the *candidate* as written in the text, the *guide* will remain at the *place of the Vigil* and ask the *candidate* the *questions*, pausing a suitable amount of time between each one for reflection. The phrases in the text, "Remain here and await my return" and "Come" should be omitted by the *guide* to account for them remaining at the *place of the Vigil* with the *candidate*.

Position of the Vigil Chief During the Pre-Vigil Ceremony. The Vigil Chief can deliver the pre-Vigil ceremony while standing up or sitting down. Standing is the traditional delivery method for every ceremonialist. It is relatively easy to do and most Vigil Chiefs will feel comfortable using this method. However, standing can sometimes create a barrier between the Vigil Chief and *candidate* because the Chief is seen as an authority figure.

Sitting down and delivering the pre-Vigil ceremony is a very different experience for both the *candidate* and the Vigil Chief. In this case, the ceremonial site resembles what would be the Vigil Chief's *place of the Vigil*. The Vigil Chief is essentially keeping a Vigil when the *candidate* arrives. The *candidate* and *guide* come upon the site and "interrupt" the Chief's Vigil. The Vigil Chief welcomes them, invites them to sit, and begins the ceremony. The *initial charge* becomes friendly advice from the Vigil Chief on what the *candidate*

can do in order to be successful in their journey.

A seated delivery creates a very personal experience. Eye contact between the Vigil Chief and Vigil Honor *candidate* makes the experience very powerful. The close proximity allows the Vigil Chief's gestures to be more effective and the *candidate* is easily able to hear and understand every word. This choice is not as effective for group ceremonies because it becomes more difficult to see, hear, and understand the Vigil Chief in a group setting. There are also options concerning the relative placement of participants in the pre-Vigil ceremony. For example, the Vigil Chief can be situated across the fire from the *candidate* or the Vigil Chief and *candidate* may sit side-by-side speaking as friends by the fire.

Pre-Vigil Participants. Management of the other people present at the ceremony can be handled in many ways. In a group setting, the Vigil Chief, Vigil Honor *candidates*, *guides*, and all Vigil Honor members can be present. The Vigil Chief and Vigil Honor committee may also choose to have a smaller group present.

In an individual ceremony setting, the Vigil Chief and the Vigil Honor *candidate* are present. Some lodges allow the *guide* to be with the *candidate* and share the experience with the *candidate* while others have the *guide* remain just outside the ceremonial grounds.

Other Vigil Honor members may be allowed to observe the ceremony. Members can be located away from sight around the perimeter of the ceremonial grounds and the number of members present can be limited to allow for a more personal experience for the *candidate*. If the Vigil Honor members are present within the ceremonial grounds, it is recommended that they remain behind the *candidate* so that the candidate's focus will be on the Vigil Chief.

Voices and Echoes. The *voices* provide inspirational messages for the *candidate* to focus

on during the night alone. The *voices* also provide the *candidate* with the message that they are not truly alone. This powerful message accentuates the shared personal experience between the *candidate* and the other Vigil Honor members.

Multiple Vigil Honor members can participate in delivering the *voices* to each *candidate*. Each Vigil Honor member assists the *voice*, and they repeat the final line of the text after one another. The repetition of the line, “I, too, have kept the Vigil,” creates an echo effect. This effect enhances the message that the *candidate* is not alone in their journey.

To enhance the echo effect, Vigil Honor members can separate themselves from one another and position themselves in various areas around the *candidate*. The number of echoes is defined by the number of Vigil Honor members who would like to participate. More echoes create a stronger message but the number of echoes should be reasonable.

Vigil Letters. The *Ceremony for the Vigil Honor* specifies that each *candidate* be provided a minimum of two letters: preparation instructions and *parting instructions*. A series of letters can be provided for the *candidate* to open throughout the Vigil for additional inspiration. Each letter is contained inside a separate sealed envelope which the *guide* hands the *candidate* before departing. The time for the *candidate* to open the envelope is specified on the outside of the envelope (e.g., “Open immediately,” “Open at _____ o’clock”).

Samples of Vigil letters can be found on the Inductions Portal of the national Order of the Arrow website at oa-scouting.org/resources/inductions.

The Single Question. The single question—“Have you kept the Vigil faithfully?”—can be asked in different settings. The question should always be asked at the morning ceremony by the Vigil Chief. However, lodges

may allow the *guide* to ask the question before the *candidate* meets the Vigil Chief at the morning ceremony. It could be asked by the *guide* at the *rendezvous* or the *place of the Vigil*. Having the *guide* ask the question before the Vigil Chief is meaningful because of the guide’s personal relationship with the *candidate*. This allows the *candidate* and *guide* to share this occasion together and also allows the *guide* to counsel the *candidate* should the response be a refusal. The completion of the Vigil Honor induction process ends when the single question has been answered to the Vigil Chief.

The Vigil Honor Ceremony. The Vigil Honor ceremony culminates the induction experience. A Vigil Honor sash may be presented to new Vigil Honor members if public recognition will be delayed. This ceremony can be done for one *candidate* at a time or performed for a group.

Public Recognition Ceremony. Each lodge may choose the time, place, and method of public recognition. There is a suggested ceremony in this booklet but lodges are encouraged to adapt the ceremony for their own unique circumstances. A public recognition ceremony should include an explanation of the Vigil Honor and identify those who are being recognized. The ceremony should identify the basis for which the *candidates* were selected and should include the presentation of a Vigil sash if not previously presented, the presentation of a Vigil Honor certificate, and an inspirational message to the lodge.

Vigil Name. The Vigil Name is the *name* bestowed upon the *candidate* as they receive the Vigil Honor.

Vigil Honor Mementos. After completion of the Vigil, some lodges present mementos to commemorate the candidate’s experience. These items may include apparel, a blanket, an arrow, or another item that would be special for the new Vigil Honor member. These items often bear the symbol of the Vigil Honor, the individual’s name, Vigil Honor

name, and year of induction. New Vigil Honor members can also be presented with a small card that bears their name and Vigil Honor name.

For more examples of Vigil Honor mementos, please visit the Inductions Portal at oa-scouting.org/resources/inductions.



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